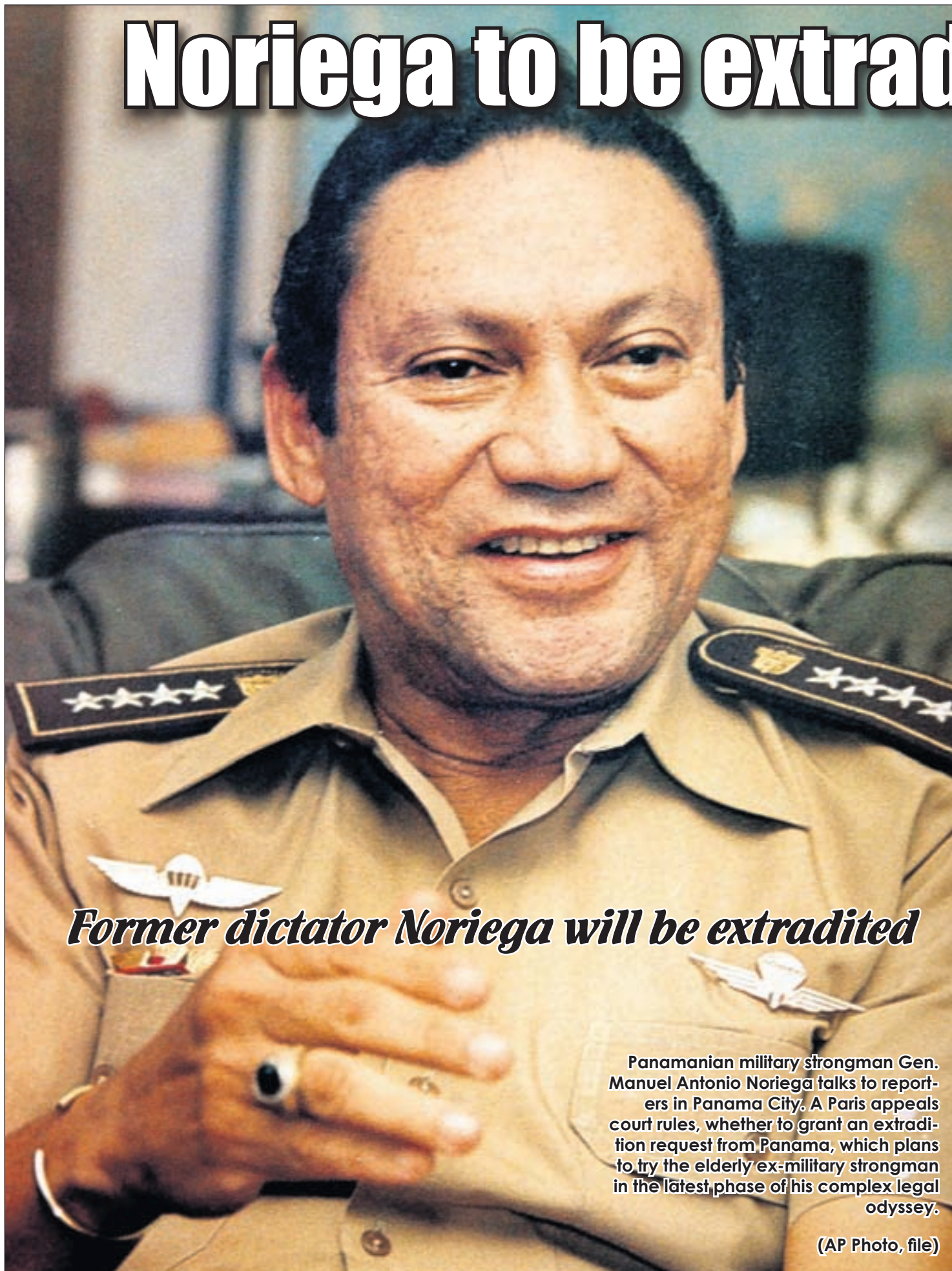




TODAY

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Monday, December 12, 2011

Noriega to be extradited



Former dictator Noriega will be extradited

Panamanian military strongman Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega talks to reporters in Panama City. A Paris appeals court rules, whether to grant an extradition request from Panama, which plans to try the elderly ex-military strongman in the latest phase of his complex legal odyssey.

(AP Photo, file)

PARIS (AP) — Former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega will be extradited to his homeland in the next few weeks, the French Justice Ministry said.

France and Panama have been working out the details of the extradition, Justice Ministry spokesman Bruno Badre told The Associated Press by telephone. A French court ruled that Noriega can be handed over to serve time for past crimes, more than 20 years after being ousted and arrested in a U.S. invasion. Badre said "the judicial conditions have now been filled" for extradition and "this will occur in the next few weeks."

The elderly former strongman has been behind bars in Florida, on drug charges, and in France, for money laundering. Panama wants Noriega returned to serve prison terms handed down after he was convicted in absentia for embezzlement, corruption and murder. The court decision came after months of legal procedures. Friends and foes alike feared that Noriega might die in a French prison — notably Panamanians who fought against human rights abuses during his 1983-1989 regime. Noriega, a one-time CIA asset, turned into an embarrassment for the U.S. after he sided up to Colombia's Medellin drug cartel and turned to crime. In Panama, he is accused of murdering opponents including Moises Giroldi, a military commander who led a failed rebellion two months before the U.S. invasion, and Hugo Spadafora, whose decapitated body was found on the border with Costa Rica in 1985. □

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VA Tech gunman a lone wolf

BOB LEWIS

ZINIE CHEN SAMPSON

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Virginia (AP)

— Police identified a part-time college student Friday as the Virginia Tech gunman who shot a police officer to death and then killed himself, triggering a lockdown on the campus that witnessed the United States' worst mass slaying in recent memory four years ago. The day before Thursday's shootings, 22-year-old Ross Truett Ashley stole a sport utility vehicle at gunpoint from a real estate office in nearby Radford, where he attended Radford University, police said. The car was found Thursday on the Virginia Tech campus. Police said Ashley walked up to the police officer he did not know and fired, then took off for the campus greenhouses,



Virginia Tech students sign notes on boards, before a candle-light vigil on the drill field, on campus, as a memorial to Virginia Tech police Officer Deriek Crouse who was gunned down Thursday during a traffic stop on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., Friday, Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Don Petersen)

ditching his pullover, wool cap and backpack. He made his way to a nearby parking lot, and when a deputy spotted him, he shot himself. Neighbor Nan Forbes said Ashley was quiet, rarely seen or heard

from. She said she knew he was in trouble when she saw two police officers guarding the door to his apartment. "It does freak us out because we live in this building, but there was not one peep of trouble,

nothing unusual," she said. Deriek W. Crouse, 39, was the police officer killed. He had been on the Virginia Tech force for four years, joining about six months after 33 people were killed in a classroom building and dorm April 16, 2007.

Crouse pulled over a student Thursday and was shot while sitting in his unmarked cruiser. The student didn't have any link to the gunman, state police spokeswoman Corrine Geller said Friday at a news conference.

Shortly before 12:30 p.m., police received a call from a witness who said an officer had been shot. About six minutes later, the first campus-wide alert was sent by email, text message and electronic signs in university buildings. Many students on campus were preparing for exams, and

they were told to stay indoors.

Fifteen minutes after the witness called police, a deputy sheriff noticed a man at the back of another parking lot nearby. The man was by himself, looking around furtively and acting "a little suspicious," according to Geller.

The deputy drove up and down the rows of the sprawling parking lot and lost sight of the man for a moment. The deputy then found the man lying on the pavement, shot to death. The handgun was nearby. Police said nobody witnessed the suicide.

The shootings unfolded on the same day Virginia Tech officials were in Washington, fighting a federal government fine over their handling of the 2007 massacre, and the shooting brought back painful memories. □

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Deadline passes for Occupy Boston without eviction

LAURA CRIMALDI
STEVE LeBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A diminished Occupy Boston encampment held its ground after police decided not to immediately enforce a midnight deadline that the mayor had set for them to leave a city square.

Two protesters were arrested after police said they moved a tent into a street and refused to move, blocking traffic. But there were no other serious confrontations between the demonstrators and supporters who gathered at the site as the deadline loomed. The threat of forcible removal left Boston poised Friday to join several other cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Francisco, where officials moved to oust protesters.

Boston police Supt. William Evans told protesters that even though Mayor Thomas Menino set the deadline, he did not specify when the camp would be shut down.

"We're continuing to work with (the protesters)... and hopefully come to a good conclusion where we don't have any confrontations and there are no arrests," Evans told reporters.

Many protesters had pulled up stakes and left the encampment Thursday after learning of the deadline, but others stayed, and some said they were prepared to be arrested.

"I have no intention of leaving," said 20-year-old Brandon Cloran, who has lived at the camp for the past six weeks. "No one here will give up," Cloran said Friday morning. The encampment site in Dewey Square in the city's financial district looked noticeably smaller Friday than it had since the



Occupy protester Lauren Chalas of Plymouth, Mass., center, sits on top of a folded tent wrapped in plastic as it is removed from the Dewey Square area of Boston. A plan by Occupy Boston protestors to bring the winterized tent into the movement's Dewey Square encampment was met with opposition from the city. The tent, which did not enter the encampment, was taken away by truck after protesters met with members of the Boston police and fire department.

(AP Photo/Steven Senne)

protesters first began occupying the site on Sept. 30. Only about 40 protesters and 35 tents remained, covering less than half the area the protest once did. The remaining protesters said they were not deterred by the smaller presence. Mike Hipson, 19, said he expects some protesters who went to Washington this week to return Friday afternoon. He said the group has no immediate

plans to leave. Around the protesters, a police officer removed metal barriers while a public works crew loaded wood, lawn chairs, plastic covers and other items onto a recycling truck. During a visit to the site at about 8 a.m. Friday, Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis wouldn't say what the city plans to do about the remaining protesters. □

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Chavez cancels trip to Argentina and Brazil

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Friday canceled a trip to Argentina and Brazil, citing his government's efforts to help flood victims.

Chavez announced the decision in a phone call on state television.

"Unfortunately I had to cancel my trip to Buenos Aires," Chavez said, adding that Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro would take his place at Saturday's inauguration of Argentine President Cristina Fernandez.

"The rains hit us hard," said Chavez, who also chatted



Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, center, waves after a press conference with foreign media at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

by phone with evacuees at a disaster shelter.

Interior and Justice Minister Tareck El Aissami said floods and mudslides this week have caused at least eight deaths and that thousands of families have left their homes to take refuge in government shelters. Chavez confirmed he was canceling the trip

hours after an organization headed by former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said it had been informed that Chavez was no longer going.

Chavez had planned to visit Silva in Brazil after attending Fernandez's inauguration.

As for his health, Chavez said "I'm very well." □

Congo's president re-elected in disputed result

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Congo's opposition leader, who was declared the loser



Supporters of Congolese president Joseph Kabila take to the streets in jubilation in Kinshasa,

of the country's election, rejected those results and insisted he was president, setting the stage for a dangerous confrontation in the volatile Central African nation.

In the hours after incumbent President Joseph Kabila was named the winner of last month's race, unease gripped Congo's capital, though the mass mobilization of opposition supporters that some observers had feared did not immediately occur Friday. Columns of smoke smudged the sky above opposition neighborhoods where angry young men burned tires, sporadic shots pierced the air, and police wearing helmets and shin guards patrolled the streets. □





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Romney seeks high ground in Presidential debate

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP)

— Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney tried to take the high road while his allies attacked Newt Gingrich, the former U.S. House of Representatives speaker now leading in national polls and in the key state of Iowa. The two leading candidates to challenge President Barack Obama next year will meet face to face at a nationally televised Republican debate Saturday night. The campaign's opening contest for the 2012 election is Jan. 3 in Iowa, just weeks away. Gingrich's quick rise in the polls is threatening Romney in the race for the Republican nomination, and Romney defended himself on Friday after supporters started airing a TV attack ad and called Gingrich untrustworthy. The



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney speaks during a town hall meeting, Friday, Dec. 9, 2011, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

(AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

former Massachusetts governor's campaign also arranged a conference call Thursday in which former New Hampshire governor John Sununu and former Senator Jim Talent attacked Gingrich. The criti-

cism came after months of focusing solely on Obama, indicating that Romney is on the defense after Gingrich's strong rise in the polls. "I can't write a script for Gov. Sununu or anybody else," Romney told reporters. "I can tell you that the people who have worked for Speaker Gingrich have their own views, and they'll express their views. My views are to focus on the distinctions we have on issues."

Romney was careful not to attack Gingrich himself, passing up an opportunity

to criticize Gingrich on immigration, an issue over which the two candidates have sparred in recent weeks. Romney's gentle tone contrasts sharply with the quickly escalating tenor of the Republican nominating campaign, which has come down to a race between him and Gingrich in recent days.

Romney is working to keep expectations low in Iowa, where he faces skepticism from conservative caucus goers because of his Mormon faith and reversals on cultural issues. □

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Fashionistas take flight on board Bolivia State Airline



Models for the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied exit a plane after modeling lingerie on the plane during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA that flew from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Juan Karita)

LA PAZ - Models for the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied modeled lingerie on a plane during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA that flew from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011, as Bolivia's Fashion Week begins. At recent shows, crafted from old newspapers, plastic bags, discarded CDs and soda bottle caps, Bolivian designer Marion Macedo's quirky fashion creations

have added an eclectic dimension to the catwalks of Europe, South America and Asia. Each dress is a unique, eco-friendly work that takes about a week to make by hand and comes with a \$250 price tag. Macedo does most of the work herself, using giant needles for the crochet work. "Not only do we recycle paper, but we also use vegetable dyes, cocoa

bean shells, and we even make our own natural adhesives," Macedo told AFP, adding that her goal was to be as "ecologically pure as possible."

the 2008 Paris Chocolate Festival -- which featured French singer Anne-Laure Girbal wearing one of her eco-dresses -- fashion shows in Tokyo in 2007 and

crocheted paper with two large ruffles, one around the neck and the other around the hem, made of pink polyethylene bags. "Paper is good material



Above and Below: Models wear creations by the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA as the plane flies from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Juan Karita)

Since starting out in 2005, the fashionista has been invited to present her work at several international venues, including the 2006 Amsterdam Fashion Week,

2010, and in Madrid in 2010. At her seventh fashion show, entitled "Recycle Yourself" this month in La Paz, a model wore a white Macedo dress of

to work with," said the designer, boasting that she learned how to "give it movement" like fabric. "It's the material I feel most comfortable with." □

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A blogger coins a phrase and galvanizes Russian discontent

ELLEN BARRY

© 2011 New York Times

MOSCOW – The man most responsible for the extraordinary burst of anti-government activism here over the past week will not speak at a rally planned for Saturday, or even attend it, because he is in prison.

Cut off from the Internet, Russia's best-known blogger will have to wait until the next morning, when his lawyer will take him a stack of printouts telling him what happened – whether the protest fizzled, exploded into violence or made history.

At a final coordinating meeting for the protest Friday evening, where a roomful of veteran organizers were shouting to make themselves heard, a young environmental activist turned toward the crowd, suddenly grave.

"I'd like to thank Aleksei Navalny," she said. "Thanks to him, specifically because of the efforts of this concrete person, tomorrow thousands of people will come out to the square. It was he who united us with the

idea: all against 'the Party of Swindlers and Thieves,'" the name Navalny coined to refer to Vladimir V. Putin's political party, United Russia.

A week ago, Navalny, 35, was famous mainly within the narrow context of Russia's blogosphere. But after Sunday's parliamentary elections, he channeled accumulated anger over reported violations into street politics, calling out to "nationalists, liberals, leftists, greens, vegetarians, Martians" via his Twitter feed (135,750 followers) and his blog(61,184) to protest the way the elections were conducted.

If Saturday's protest is as large as its organizers seem to expect – the city has granted a permit for 30,000 – Navalny will be credited for mobilizing a generation of young Russians through social media, a leap much like the one that spawned Occupy Wall Street and youth uprisings throughout Europe this year.

The full measure of Navalny's charisma became clear after protests Monday

night; an estimated 5,000 people materialized, making it the largest anti-Kremlin demonstration in recent memory, and Navalny was arrested on charges of resisting the police and sentenced to 15 days in prison. All that night, as temperatures dipped below freezing, Navalny's hipster disciples stood vigil outside the precinct where he was being held, their eyes flickering to their Twitter feeds. Someone had spread a rumor that he was dead, and even his lawyers were unsure of his whereabouts, adding to the sense that Navalny – who has been reluctant to present himself as a political leader – was at the center of everything that was happening.

"He is the only man who can take all the common hipsters and make them go onto the street," said Anton Nikolayev, 35, who spent much of Tuesday lingering outside courtrooms hoping to see Navalny. "He is a figure who could beat Putin if he was allowed."

This assertion may sound far-fetched. Putin, now in



Aleksei Navalny, an activist and blogger, near his office in central Moscow. Navalny used social media to urge his followers to protest against the reported violations regarding Russia's recent parliamentary elections, and if its turnout is large enough, he will be credited for mobilizing a generation of young Russians through social media, a leap much like the one that gave the U.S. Occupy Wall Street and youthful uprisings throughout Europe this year.

(James Hill/The New York Times)

his 12th year as Russia's paramount leader, has approval ratings above 60 percent, according to the independent Levada Center. As recently as two weeks ago, Levada found that 60 percent of Russians surveyed were not willing to consider any figure from the anti-Putin opposition as a presidential candidate.

Only 1 percent named Navalny, whose exposure is through Twitter and his blogs, Navalny.ru and Rospil.info.

But the aftermath of Sunday's parliamentary elections has shaken political assumptions, largely because the authorities seem unable to regain control of the public discourse. □

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Stocks closed higher Friday as debt deal evolves

NEW YORK (AP) — A deal to forge stronger ties between most of Europe's economies sent stocks sharply higher at the end of last week as hopes grew that the region is close to resolving its debt crisis. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 186 points.

The Dow and S&P 500 both had their second straight week of gains. Financial stocks rose the most over the week as worries eased about Europe. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose back above 2 percent as investors shed low-risk investments. All 17 nations that use the euro agreed to sign a treaty that allows a central European authority closer oversight of their budgets. Nine other EU nations are considering it. Britain is the lone holdout.

The agreement came after marathon overnight talks among European leaders at a two-day summit in Brussels. A deal on tighter



Specialist Ronnie Howard, right, works at the post that trades Dupont on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stock indexes rose in early trading last week after 26 European nations agreed to consider tying their economies together more closely in hopes of preventing another debt crisis. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

fiscal control is considered a crucial step before the European Central Bank will consider committing more money to lower borrowing costs of heavily in-

debted countries like Italy and Spain by buying their bonds.

Ryan Detrick, senior technical strategist with Schaffer's Investment Research,

cautioned that investors have been disappointed by Europe's previous efforts to contain its debt crisis. The market will likely remain volatile in the coming weeks,

Detrick said, because the Europe plan is "only a minor step" toward a solution. "We've seen these agreements before, and they can just as easily deteriorate," Detrick said.

The Dow closed up 186.56 points, or 1.6 percent, at 12,184.26. It's up 1.4 percent for the week.

Bank stocks led the market higher, reflecting traders' optimism about Europe's progress toward solving its crisis. Citigroup Inc. rose 3.7 percent, Morgan Stanley 3.1 percent and JPMorgan Chase & Co. 3 percent.

Banks have been weighed down for months by fears about their exposure to Europe. The biggest European banks have been downgraded. If Europe's crisis spins out of control, U.S. banks that do business with them would also suffer because of the closely intertwined relationships between global lenders and financial markets. □

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Europe sees way out of crisis

DON MELVIN
GABRIELE STEINHAUSER
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Working almost to exhaustion and persuading countries one by one, European leaders agreed Friday to redefine their continent — hoping that by joining their fiscal fortunes they might stop a crippling debt crisis, save the euro currency and prevent worldwide economic chaos.

Only one country said no: Britain. It will risk isolation while the rest of the continent plots its future.

The coalition came together in a marathon negotiating session among the 27 European Union heads of government — hard bargaining that began with dinner Thursday evening and ended after 4 a.m., when red-eyed officials appeared before weary journalists to explain their proposed treaty.

It was a major step forward in the long, postwar march toward European integration. It was two decades ago, on Dec. 9 and 10, 1991, that European negotiators drafted a treaty in Maastricht, Netherlands, to unite their politics, create a central bank and, one day, invent a common currency.

Friday's agreement — 23 countries are in favor and three more say they are open to the idea — would force countries to submit their budgets for central review and limit the deficits they can run.

The hope is that it will stem a crisis over sovereign debt that consumed Greece, spread to Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Spain, and threatens to explode into a worldwide financial crisis capable of pushing the global economy into re-

cession.

"This is the breakthrough to the stability union," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said. "We are using the crisis as an opportunity for a renewal."

To prevent excessive deficits, countries in the treaty will have to submit their national budgets to the European Commission, the executive body of the EU, which will have the power to send them back for revision.

They must also bring their budgets close to balance. Except in special circumstances, the budget deficit of a country won't be able to exceed 0.5 percent of gross domestic product, the amount of goods and services produced by its economy. An unspecified "automatic correction mechanism" would punish the rule-breakers.

Germany and France insist that fiscal union is the best way to regain market trust, badly shaken by the escalating financial crisis. Most economists think it will not be enough.

They say the euro countries also need enough money to guarantee that they can pay the massive debts that have resulted from running budget deficits year after year. Euro leaders put off until March a decision on whether to provide money on top of a €500 billion, or \$668 billion, bailout fund for euro countries.

European leaders did agree to add €200 billion to the International Monetary Fund to help ailing countries.

Only 17 of the 27 European Union countries use the euro currency, and its stability has been threatened by the massive national debts of some of those 17. All but two of the 10

non-euro countries — Britain and Denmark — are committed to adopting it eventually.

The countries that use the euro found they had friends among those that do not. At least six and as many as nine non-euro countries are willing to bind themselves to the euro countries in a pact aimed at having their economies converge.

Britain said no for two reasons: Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party includes a strong anti-EU element, and Cameron, despite trying deep into the night, failed to win an exemption from regulation of the British financial industry.

The other leaders would have none of it: Bankers



A Ferrari sports car drives down Rome's fashionable Via del Corso shopping street, Friday, Dec. 9, 2011. All European Union states except Britain moved toward setting up a new treaty Friday, giving up crucial powers over their own budgets in an attempt to overcome a crippling debt crisis.

(AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

and lack of regulation are viewed on the continent as a prime cause of the financial crisis.

"What was on offer is not in

Britain's interest, so I didn't agree to it," Cameron said. "We're not in the euro, and I'm glad we're not in the euro. □"

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Year of the Shoco, 2012 Aruba Bird Calendar launched

ORANJESTAD - Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes 2012 to be the Year of the Shoco, the year of wisdom. 2012 should be Aruba's year of nature conservation. Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes that a National Conservation Master Plan be developed and implemented in an effort to save very important nature areas. Achieving such would guarantee a certain level of quality of Product Aruba and in turn guarantee a certain level of quality of life to all. Aruba's Arikok National Park, which is good for some 17% of the island's surface, is a true jewel, but it does not reflect the complete variety of micro habitats to be found in Aruba. For instance, Aruba is internationally known for its 3 IBA's, or Important Bird Areas, none of which are part of our National Park. These are the reef islands at the San Nicolas Bay area, Spanish Lagoon and Bubali Plas. While our national park is among the most arid of places on the island and its northern border with the Caribbean Sea can be quite hostile, the important bird areas are to its contrary characterized by their peaceful interplay between land



and water which generates better opportunities for Aruba's wildlife. Of the 224 bird species registered in Aruba, less than 25% of the species can be found in our national park. Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes that the following areas be added to our National Park in or-

der to conserve a more holistic representation of Aruba's variety of micro habitats, which would then cover a greater variety of our flora and fauna. Areas of Aruba which should be conserved for future generations by adding them to our national park entail among others the

three above mentioned important bird areas. We can start with all the reef islands adjacent to the south coast of the island. These contribute significantly to one of Aruba's unique traits in the world. Aruba is so far the only place in the world where 10 species of terns breed. The Bubali Plas,

once a bird wildlife hotspot is beginning to lose its importance. Plans are in the making to revamp this location through water and reed management, which would boost its importance back to its original level.

Continued on Page 11

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Continued from Page 10

The Spanish Lagoon is connected to our national

park by two 'rooien', Rooi Taki and Rooi Bringamosa. Adding the Spanish Lagoon and these green corridors to the national park would directly link a part of the south side of our island with the northern park area. In accordance with world nature conservation recommendations, all areas containing mangrove trees should be conserved by adding them to the park. Areas such as from Mangel Halto to Santo Largo (Aruba's most extensive mangrove area) as well as the mangrove areas from Parkietenbos Landfill all the way to the Varadero yacht club should be added to our national park. The reef islands in front of the Oranjestad harbor, which were once covered with mangroves, could become a nice restoration project. Our salinas which contribute to the survival chances

of migratory birds should be part of the conservation efforts. Saliña di Malmok, Saliña di Palmbeach, Saliña Santo Largo and Saliña Savaneta should be included in the national park as well as our ponds (tankis). Other important areas such as Rooi Lamoenchi, Cero Teishi, Rooi Manonchi, the seaside area from Zeewijk to Cura Cabay and from Kudareba (westpunt) to Arashi should also be incorporated. Then there are our beautiful dunes which cannot be excluded. And last but not least, the wings to the sides of Parke Nacional Arikok should be extended. To compliment these terrestrial areas, the largest part possible of our territorial waters including beaches should be declared Aruba's marine park. Aruba Birdlife Conservation started a campaign on February 4, 2011 to get our

Shoco nominated as the National Bird of Aruba. Dr. Adrian Delnevo recently estimated that there are only approximately 200 pairs of Shoco's left.

The numbers continue to dwindle. The Shoco is one of the two endemic subspecies Aruba has. Protecting this unique bird of Aruba may prevent its extinction. We hope that the Government of Aruba will soon declare our Shoco the National Bird of Aruba. The nomination of our Shoco, the symbol of wisdom, as the National Bird of Aruba, could then be seen as the kick-off for the develop-

ment and implementation of an ambitious National Conservation Master Plan. Just Imagine Aruba! This is the fourth consecutive year that Aruba Birdlife Conservation has launched a bird calendar. We are grateful to Chartis, the sponsor as well as the ministers and members of parliament who are starting to rally conservation efforts. The calendars are on sale for 12,50 florin and all funds go to the Aruba Birdlife Conservation foundation. Contact can be established via aruba.birdlife.conservation@gmail.com. □

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Jairo Boekhoudt celebrates birthday at Windows of Aruba



DIVI LINKS - Aruba's super song bird Jairo Boekhoudt was honored on Thursday afternoon by his friends at Windows of Aruba at the Divi Links. Not only was there a lot of fun and cheer, Jairo



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together with his talented musical friends took over the band's equipment for an hour long jam session. On the guitar was Armin Solognier and Izaira on the Bongos with Jairo leading the way with his beautiful voice. The pictures show the fun that was had, tonight Jairo will perform live at Cafe Chaos in Downtown Oranjestad across from the cinemas. □





In this Aug. 28, 2011 file photo, singer Adele is shown at the MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles

Associated Press

Adele is Billboard's top artist of 2011

NEW YORK (AP) — If there is a "best-of" list for music this year, it's a safe bet to put Adele on top. Billboard has declared her the No. 1 artist of 2011. Rihanna was No. 2, followed by Katy Perry, Lady Gaga and Lil Wayne. The list, announced Friday, takes into account album sales, charting singles, radio airplay and other factors. Rounding out the list was Bruno Mars at No. 6, Nicki Minaj at No. 7, Taylor Swift at No. 8, Justin Bieber at No. 9 and Chris Brown at No. 10. Adele's album "21" was the best-selling of the year with 4.8 million sold. Following "21" on the list: Swift's "Speak Now," Gaga's "Born This Way," Jason Aldean's "My Kinda Party" and Susan Boyle's "The Gift."

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U.S., 13 other countries vow to back online freedoms

TOBY STERLING

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Fourteen countries

including the United States vowed Friday to work to promote online freedoms, with an emphasis on helping bloggers who operate under oppressive regimes. The countries, which also included Britain, France and Canada, endorsed a statement at the end of a two-day conference in the Netherlands saying that their goals included preventing "the misappropriation of technologies for repressive ends, inappropriate requests for personal data for political purposes, and illegitimate blocking of content."

The conference was inspired in part by the bloggers and social network users who have played a key role in fomenting the revolutions of the "Arab Spring" — and took great risks along the way.

Other countries signing off on the statement came from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, but did not include any regimes from the Middle East or the Arab world.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opened the Freedom Online conference Thursday with a direct call for companies not to sell surveillance tools to authoritarian regimes.

In an emotional speech Friday, Syrian blogger Amjad Baiazy said his country's surveillance system was built by Western companies. He said he was arrested and tortured in May for expressing his opinion

online, and a friend was arrested as recently as this week for a Facebook posting.

He called on governments to fight for "security of citizens, not corporations or governments."

Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal said the conference had created "a coalition that will share information online and offline on freedom of expression, a coalition that will support individuals particularly operating in oppressive environments in the exercise of human rights ... through the



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, left, delivers a brief statement as Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal, right, listens at the Dutch Foreign Ministry in The Hague, Netherlands, Thursday Dec. 8, 2011.

Associated Press

Internet."

Companies and civil liberties groups also attended, including many that already participate in projects with similar views such as the Global Network Initiative and Silicon Valley Standard.

Dutch member of parliament Marietje Schaafe echoed Clinton's call for restraints on selling surveillance technologies, saying that companies "with a reputation to lose" — such as Google, one of the conference's sponsors — are more likely to heed it. □

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NASA rover prepares for 5th winter on Mars

ALICIA CHANG
AP Science Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) —

NASA's lone surviving Mars rover has been busy exploring its surroundings since it rolled up to its latest crater destination four months ago. Now the solar-powered Opportunity is in search of a place to spend its fifth winter.

The robot geologist has been scouting out sites along the crater rim that not only have interesting rocks to examine but also ample sunshine. The hardy rover survived four previous Martian winters. Scientists expect no different and even drew up a to-do list. Opportunity will "keep active all winter long," said Bruce Banerdt, rover project scientist at NASA headquarters.

Among its chores: studying bedrock and soil at its chosen winter site. While Opportunity can drive short distances from one outcrop to another, it can't



This image provided by NASA shows a fragment along the rim of Endeavour Crater where the Mars rover Opportunity has been exploring since August.

Associated Press

venture far in the cold.

It's a bittersweet juncture for Opportunity, which along with its twin, Spirit, landed on opposite sides

of the red planet in January 2004. Both operated beyond their original three-month mission and found geologic evidence that

Mars once was warmer and wetter than it is today. Spirit suddenly stopped communicating with Earth last year, shortly after it became stuck in fluffy sand. NASA diligently listened for any sign from Spirit and finally gave up this past spring. Despite Spirit's demise, Opportunity continued to trek across the Martian plains and arrived at the western rim of Endeavour Crater in August. The rover has wowed scientists with discoveries at the site, which includes rocks and soil unlike any it has encountered during its years roaming the planet.

Opportunity recently uncovered a mineral deposit that formed from water flowing out of volcanic rocks. Chief scientist Steve Squyres of Cornell University called it the "single most powerful piece of evidence" that Opportunity has found so far of liquid water existing on Mars long ago.

The finding was presented Wednesday at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in San Francisco. With a little over 21 miles (33 kilometers) on its odometer, Opportunity is showing some wear, including an arthritic shoulder, but is otherwise in good health.

"It's going on eight years, but we're not done yet," said Ray Arvidson, the mission deputy scientist from Washington University in St. Louis. That's eight years as measured in Earth time. A Martian year is equivalent to 687 Earth days, or nearly two Earth years.

Opportunity will soon get some company on the surface. NASA launched its latest spacecraft to Mars last month, a mega-rover named Curiosity that's set to land next summer.

The \$2.5 billion mission will study a mountain inside a crater to determine whether the environment was conducive for microbial life. □

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